

Los Angeles Chapter, American Institute of Architects
3780 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 900
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Special Design Awards Insert
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L. A. ARCHITECT

Design Awards 1990



Vitra International
Furniture
Manufacturing
Facility and
Museum, Frank O.
Gehry &
Associates. See
page 2.

Clockwise from right: Venice House interior; floor plans; perspective; Venice boardwalk facade.



MERIT AWARD

Antoine Predock, Architect

VENICE HOUSE

Venice, California

Owner
Robert Douroux
Contractor
Robert Douroux
Structural Engineer
Parker Resnick
Special Window Fabricator
Robert Rentz
Photographer
Timothy Hursley

HOLL: The technology of the project is connected to its materials. You can see what it is made of.

FREED: For the house's size, the project has too much public space.

HOLL: This house represents the context of Los Angeles, the beach as "the piazza of Los Angeles." The flipped window is inventive. It is problematic speculative construction, however its simplicity and the connection to the space and light of California are inspiring.

SCHMERTZ: A true invention. Its ocean front facade with the tilting window connects living space to the beach and promenade with breathtaking directness. Nobody goes in or out that way--the narrow waist level moat takes care of that, simply, abstractly, cleverly. The house itself is abstract, pure, geometric, explicitly modern, yet just right for Venice.

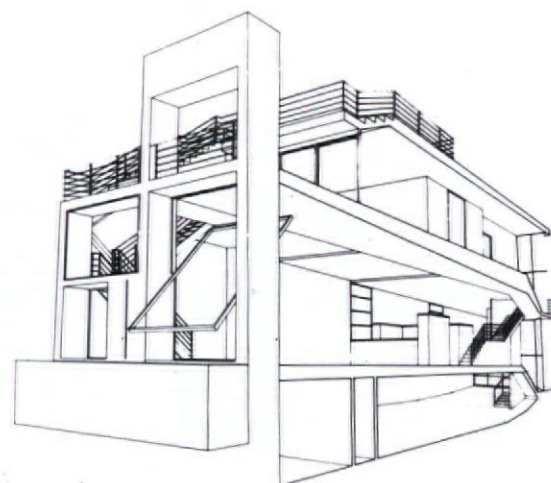
The design requirements for this house on the oceanfront walk in Venice were that it engage beachfront activities while providing private, upper level spaces and decks. The building envelope extends to three foot side, front and rear setbacks on a 90 foot by 28 foot lot, with parking below the living level.

Apart from the intense social connections with the beach, the house affirms mythic connections to the sea and geologic past. A reverse perspective, created by the diverging upward-sloping ceiling and glistening black granite runway on the floor, draws the viewer toward the ocean.

On the ocean-side, a cast-in-place concrete armature suggests bleached bones along the shore. A granite-clad monolith covered with a film of water separates the house from a public walk along the beach five feet below. This water to ocean relationship expresses the spiritual connection of house to timeless place, and becomes an urban offering, inviting the passerby to touch the water.

The red steel window at the end of the axis pays homage to the color of the Japanese flag, and pivots horizontally to form a 9' x 13.5' aperture to the ocean. The flanking vertical slit of cast-in-place glass creates a mysterious threshold to the west, and transforms incoming sun into laser-like green rays. Throughout the interior, zones of natural light diffused through obscure glass create lateral divisions suffusing the house with soft light.

On the street facade, cantilevered balconies define the entry, and a mirrored garage door acknowledges temporal Los Angeles. Tile stairs ascend from the master bedroom terrace to the upper roof terrace and the deck to offer views in all directions: city lights, beach, Pacific Ocean, LAX takeoffs, Palos Verdes, Malibu, Hollywood Hills.



2520 Cimarron Street, Los Angeles

Owner
University of California
Civil Engineer
The S.W. Group
Electrical Engineer
Athans Associates
Landscape Architect
Robert M. Fletcher
Contractor
California IBA, Inc.
Mechanical Engineer
MB & Associates
Structural Engineer
Melvyn Green & Associates, Inc.
Photographer
Tom Bonner

SCHMERTZ: (I'm) so used to seeing things just sheathed in gypsum board, but here is a constructed building.

FREED: When you do so little, it must be working perfectly.

HOLL: This project for me exists out of time. It looks like it could have been done in 1960, which excites me. The theme, a thickened wall, is a clever concept. One of the things I like about it is the fact that it is defining a kind of space which is related to the larger realm of the field, defining the edge of this large garden. I like the idea of just the tectonic exposure of the brick bearing wall, the steel windows, the stucco closure.

SCHMERTZ: I love this. It is very simple, very clear, very abstract. It is very early Lou Kahn. It preserves the site and the landscaping. It is much better to devise a scheme which borders rather than moves into that open space.

HOLL: It is a project about the organization of space. These void spaces in between show you what the whole wall concept is about.

FREED: It was a good planning dimension. It has good rigor about the units, a very handsome planning module, a handsome enclosure.

SCHMERTZ: Disdaining postmodernist stylistic devices, it has the simple directness of some of the best low-budget academic buildings of the sixties.

MERIT AWARD

Barton Phelps and Associates

NORTH RANGE, WILLIAM ANDREWS CLARK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

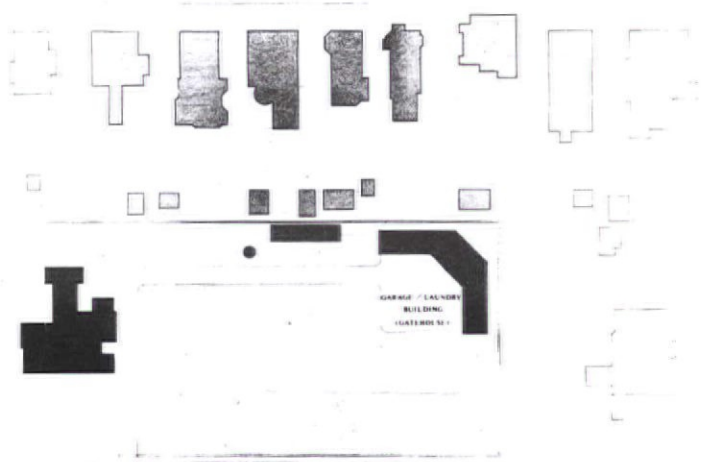
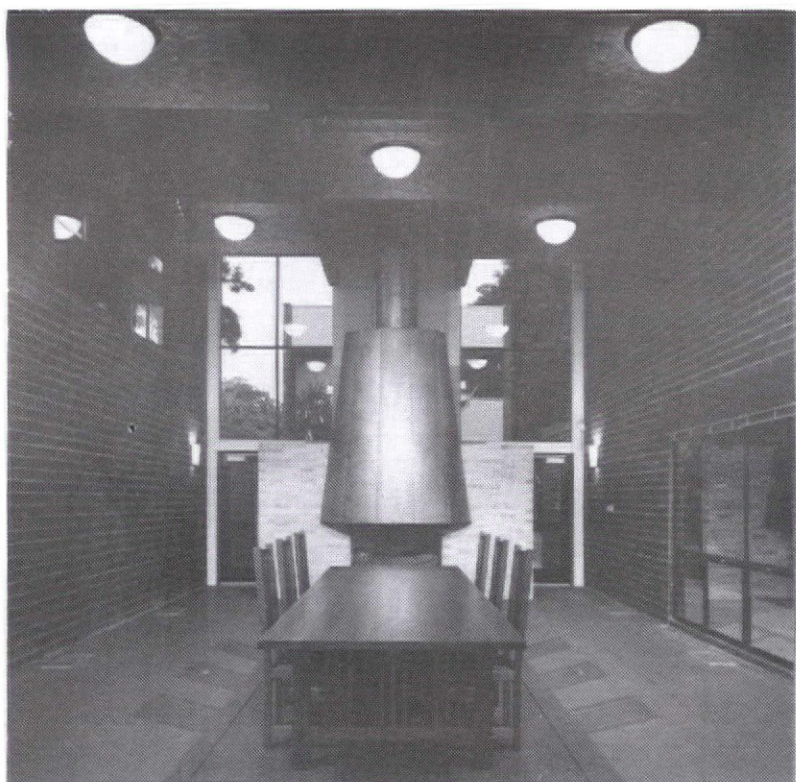
Designed in 1926 by Robert Farquhar, the Clark Library is a Beaux Arts pavilion hidden behind a walled city block in the once grand West Adams Neighborhood near downtown Los Angeles. The building used to be in the backyard of the mining fortune heir William Andrews Clark, Jr., along with his observatory and an elaborate servants quarters/garage. By 1934 when the estate was willed to UCLA with the stipulation that no new building occur within 100 feet of the library, Clark had cleared the block of ten other houses, relocated the servants quarters, and continued his wall around the entire property. Whatever he had in mind, the removal of the observatory (1954) and the Clark house (1971) left the library adrift in its half-finished landscape.

Joint funding by UCLA and the Getty Trust are supporting the first phase of the library's expansion into UCLA's new Center for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Studies. The master plan calls for a major new library facility below grade in the center of the site. The architect's scheme is based on the simple idea of an extendable, thickened wall that can contain various functions (book storage, editorial offices, conference room/commons, apartments and dining room for visiting scholars) in a series of 20 foot-wide modules. The first four form a range that runs 270 feet along the north side of the block.

Formally, the building relates more to the stocky wall around the property than it does to the delicate English Baroque Revival library; the brick color matches the original Victorian red of the 65-year old wall rather than the library's five-color English bond. The thin linearity of the North Range cuts between existing trees and leaves ample room for a future sunken court in the center of the site. Its two story walls are tall enough to give a sense of enclosure to the entire block and thus help to anchor the library in an otherwise empty field.

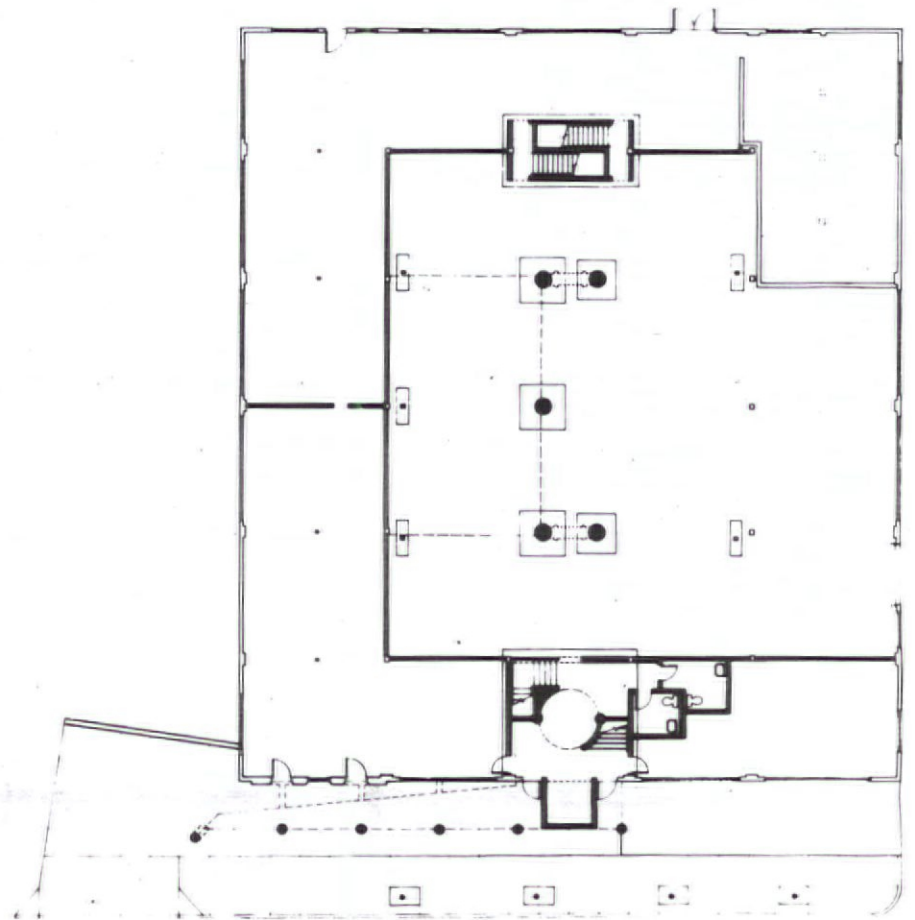
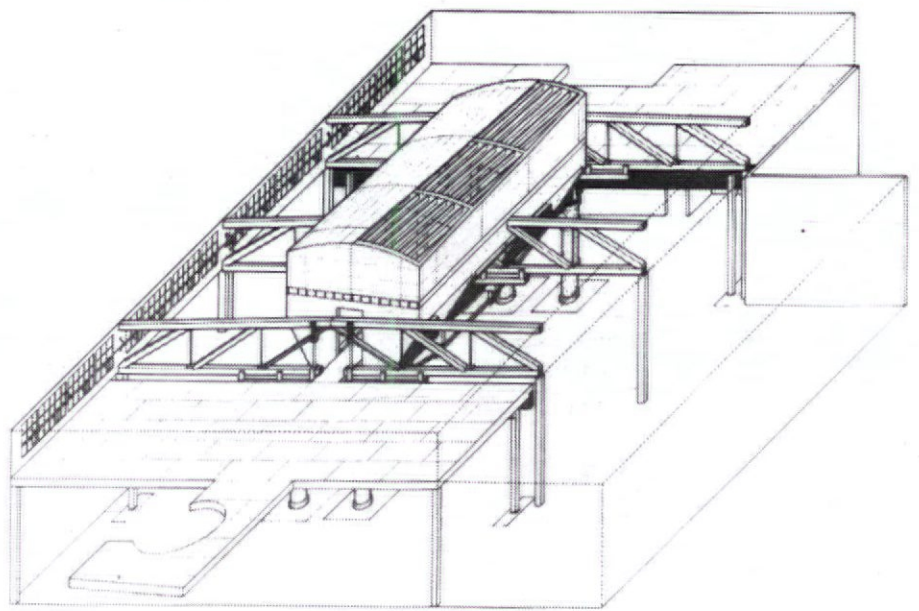
Disciplined by a tight budget, the building relies on 8" structural brick walls, pre-cast concrete elements, and steel windows for durability and institutional character. End walls are stucco and glass. Tailored to specific functions, they enclose three entry courtyards that accommodate outdoor activities, and allow for alternating readings of the building as a unit or as four separate pavilions.

Interiors are spartan: exposed brick walls (rough side in), stained concrete or carpeted floors, and simple, but finely crafted cherry furniture. The conference room/commons is conceived as minimal version of a seventeenth century baronial hall with a massive fireplace (refractory brick) and coffered ceiling (oriented strand board). The scholars' rooms are L-shaped bed-sitters with floor to ceiling windows that look out on the library through an enormous fig tree.



Clockwise from top: interior, North Range of William Andrews Clark Memorial Library; exterior colonnade; site plan.

Upper right: Paramount Laundry, axonometric;
lower right: floor plan; below: interior with vault
section; lower left: exterior.



3960 Ince Boulevard, Culver City

Owner
Frederick Norton Smith
Electrical Engineer
Michael Cullen
Paul Immerman
Landscape Architect
Steve Ormenyi
Contractor
Scott Gates
Mechanical Engineer
Paul Antieri
Structural Engineer
Joe Kurily
Project Architect
Dennis Ige
Photographer
Alex Vertikoff

FREED: This is really nice. It's a thought-through thing.

HOLL: The strength of this project is in space and the sense of materials.

SCHMERTZ: You can see from bottom to top how they thought it through.

HOLL: The simplicity of that row of windows is quite strong. The project is strongest where it is the simplest. That detail where the steel windows dive into the galvanized steel soffit and the glow of light is a special moment.

SCHMERTZ: A commonplace existing building made chic by and subsumed into its addition—an adroit, skillful, stylish, yet practical design.

MERIT AWARD

Eric Owen Moss

PARAMOUNT LAUNDRY

Currently occupied by a major graphic design firm, the existing 20,000 square foot warehouse is located in a Culver City neighborhood of studio production facilities. The original building, with poured concrete walls and wood truss-supported roof, has two essential organizational components: a two floor perimeter and an open, double height volume with clerestory windows, centrally positioned in plan. Parking requirements permit a maximum addition of 6000 square feet to the building. The expansion design includes extending the existing second floor south, and adding a new, two-part third floor.

The building is approached from the north, via the Santa Monica Freeway from which it can be clearly seen. A new canopy and central lobby are positioned on the street elevation. The lobby is capped with a simple vault, adjusted in plan toward the direction of freeway view and traffic flow. Where the vault is inserted, the existing roof sheathing is removed, and the vault and supporting walls extend vertically above the original roof, identifying new components of the building below: the entrance lobby, the bridge connecting the two sections of the new third floor, and a new rear exit stair.

The new second floor projects into the central space and is supported by columns that also support the bridge. The new third floor consists of separate areas at opposite ends of the central volume, just below the bottom chord of the existing wood trusses. To allow vertical clearance for the bridge that links the two third floors, a four foot portion of the bottom chord of the existing trusses is removed, and restructured with a steel tube below and two new vertical chords. At the center of the bridge are two benches that encourage informal meetings or gatherings.

The building is a combination of wood, steel, and reinforced concrete construction. The vault is covered with painted sheets of steel. The new columns supporting the entry canopy and the bridge are vitrified clay pipes filled with reinforced concrete.

Portland, Oregon and Cleveland, Ohio

Owner
MOBA, Inc.
Electrical Engineer
Saul Goldin
Contractor No. 1
Fred Olivier Construction Company
Contractor No. 2
R & H Construction Company
Mechanical Engineer
I & N Consulting Engineers
Structural Engineer
Joseph Perazzelli
Metal Fabricator
Tom Farrage
Woodwork
X-Tech
Photographer
Farshid Assassi

HOLL: It has an idea...how many projects in our selection have an idea?

SCHMERTZ: It has an idea, and a beautifully executed idea...also if you consider the plain business of a men's store, these references to early industrial technics have nice masculine technology. It wouldn't be appropriate for a women's store. The architects have looked carefully at the looms, warps, and wefts of textile manufacture, and creatively reinvented them, turning them into frameworks to display men's clothes. This evocation of old technologies in the making of a new setting has been done with great felicity and wit.

HOLL: The plan shows a concept, and all the wires are about some kind of lyrical thought and freshness of detail.

MERIT AWARD

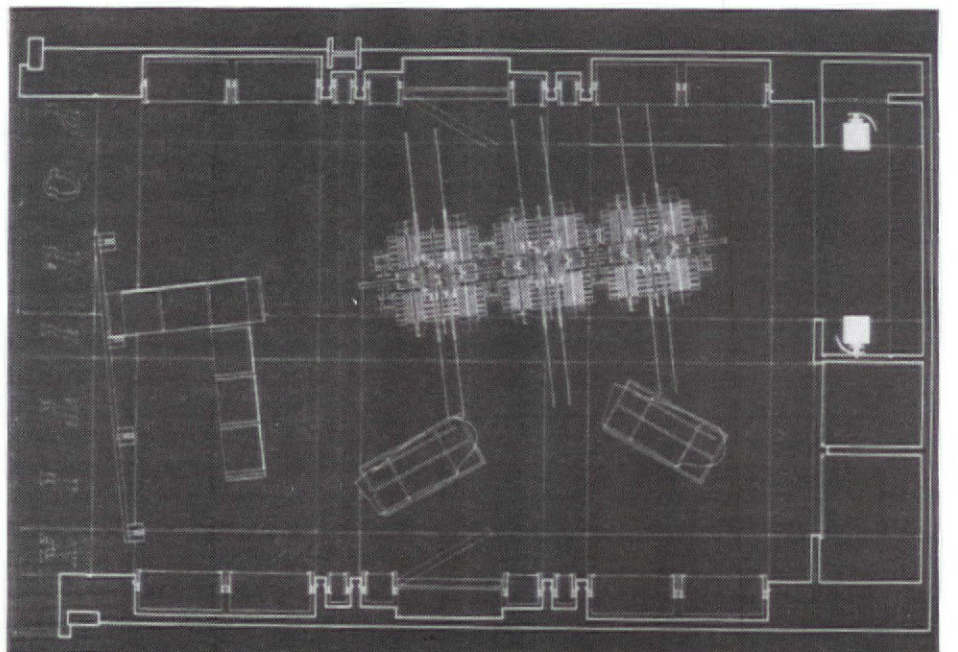
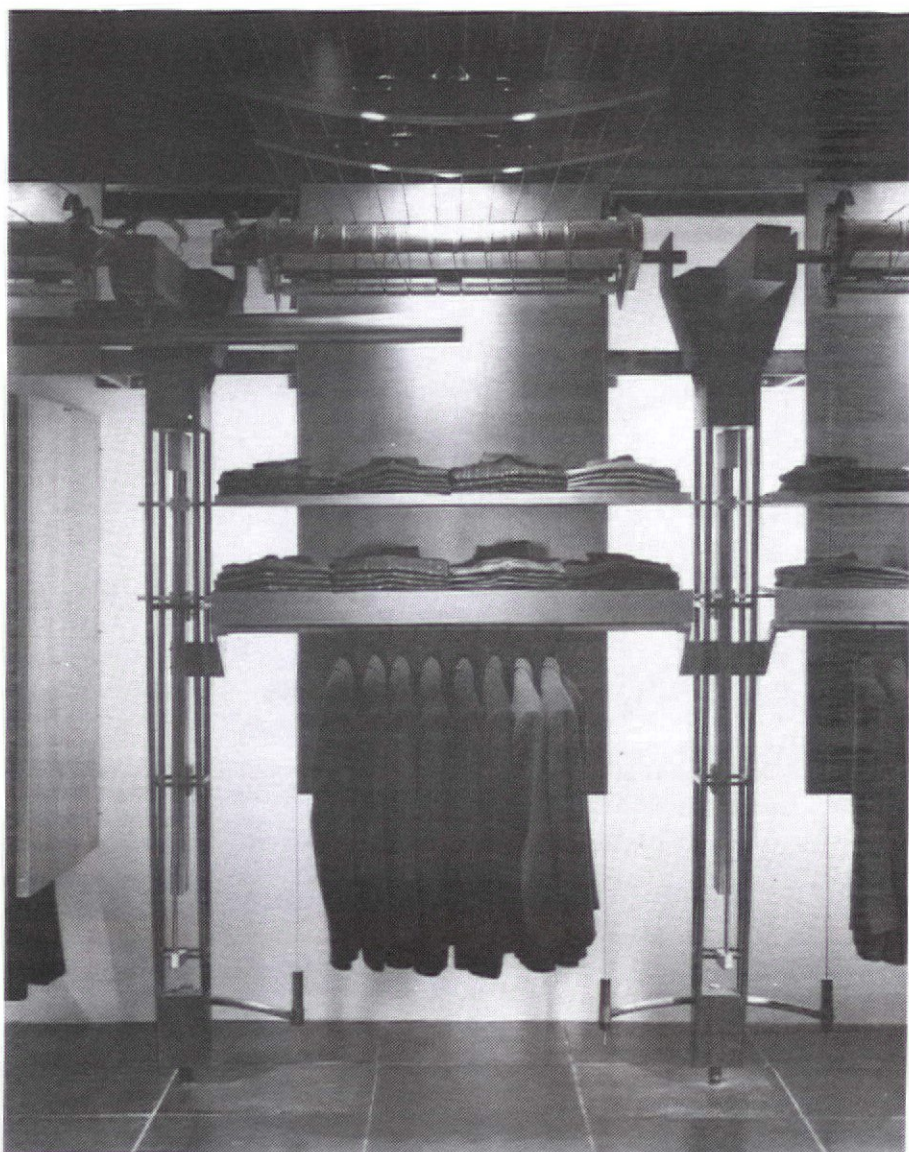
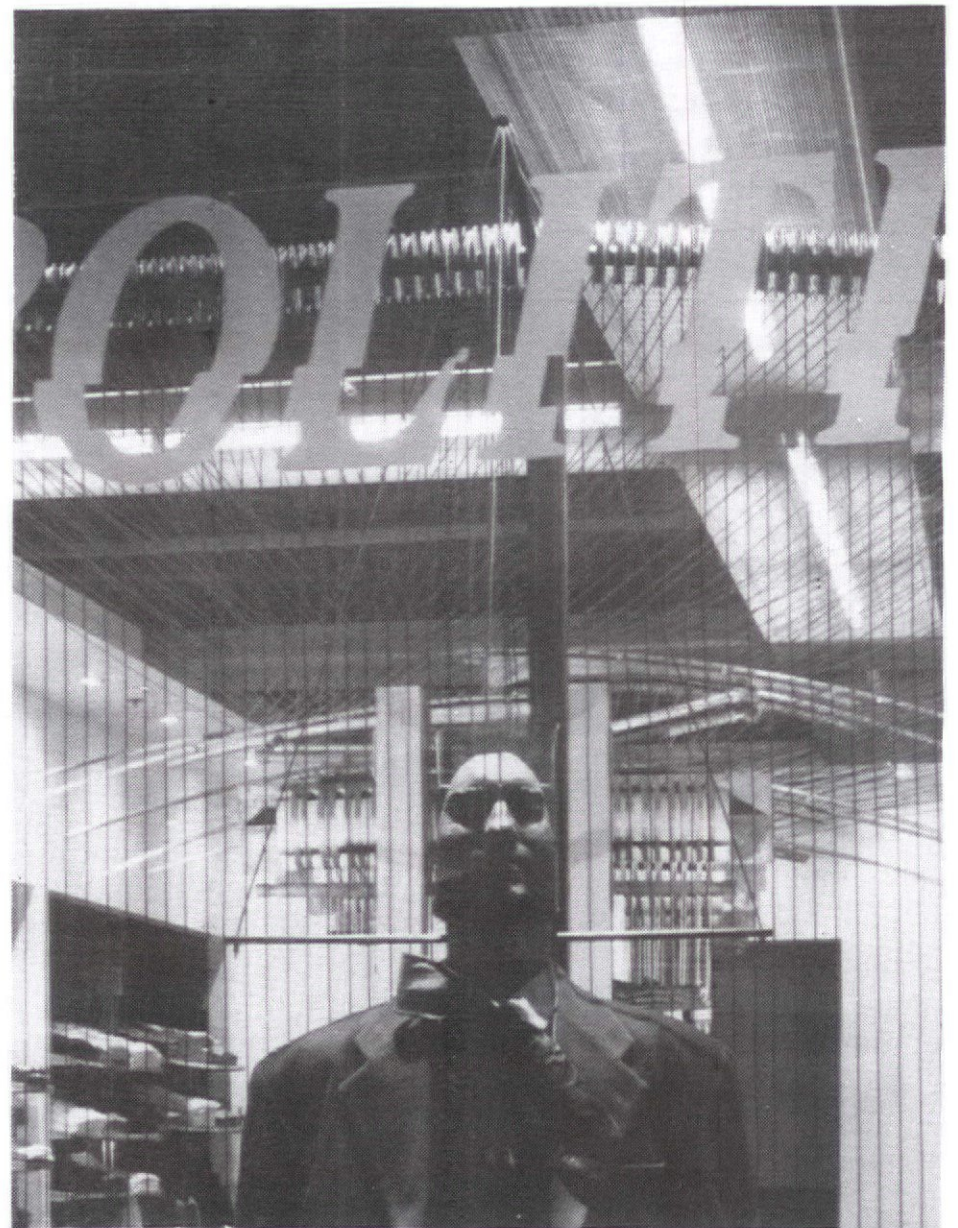
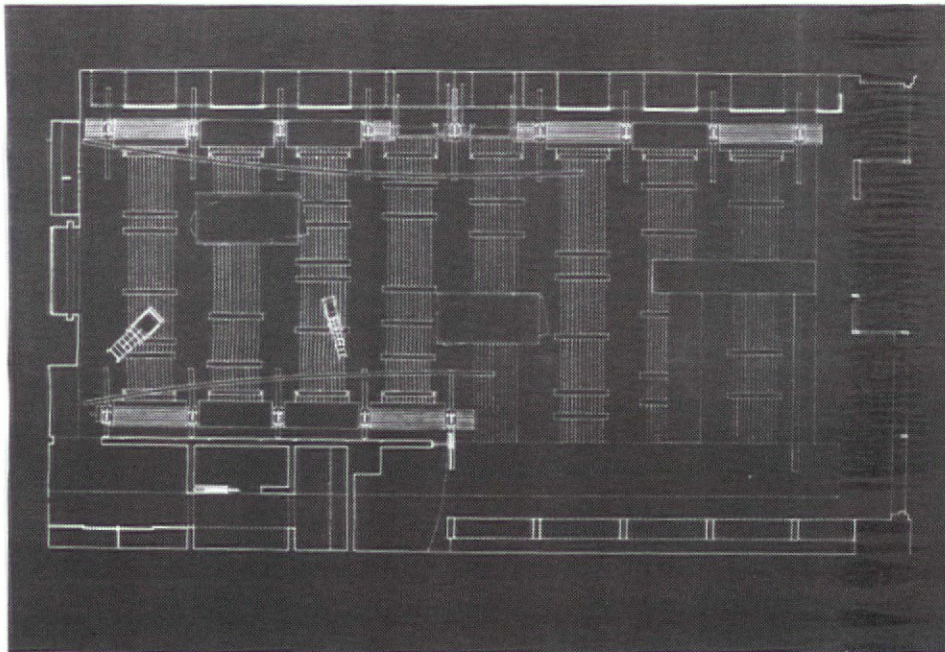
POLITIX

Morphosis/Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi

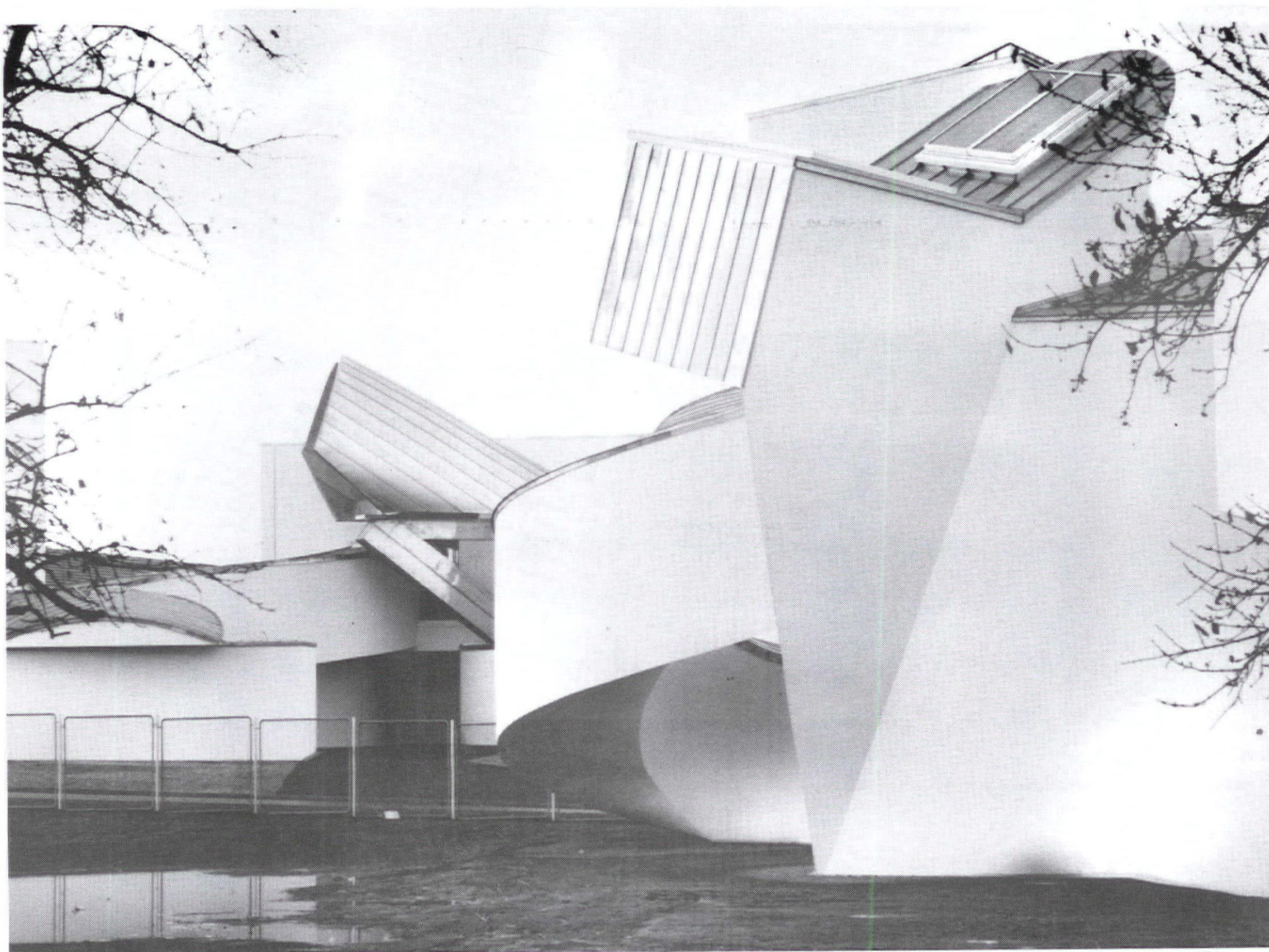
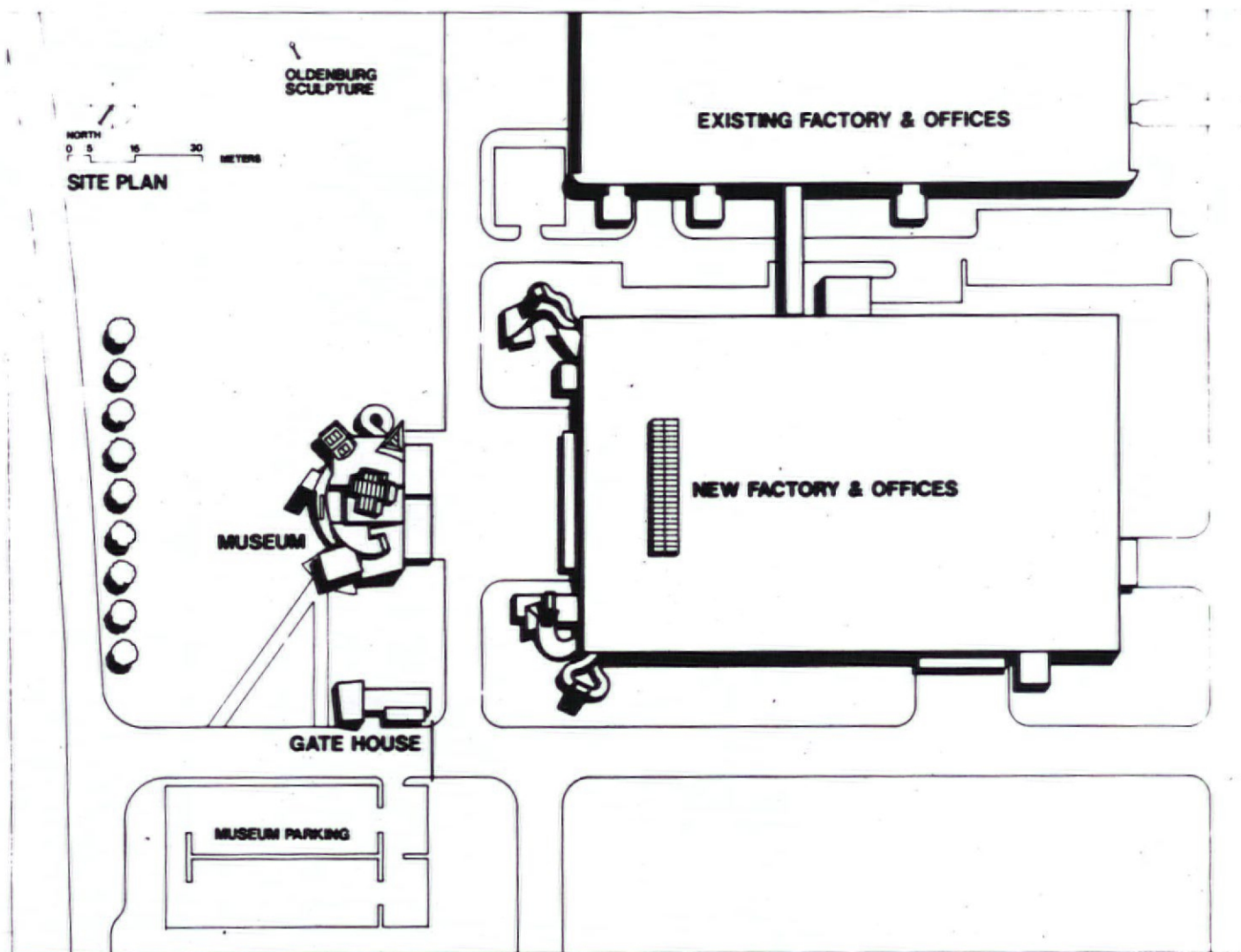
Both projects involve tenant improvements to retail properties. In the Portland store, the tenant improvements are to a 1000 square foot space in a new commercial mall. The Cleveland project involves tenant improvements to 1500 square feet of space in the historic storefront area of a renovated commercial mall.

The design direction of both projects utilizes residual images of the mechanisms that produce fabric. The machinery of the eighteenth century, as found in the sketches of Diderot, serves as the inspiration behind the objects which are both fixed and floating within the spaces. Of the two schemes, the one in Portland uses the object centered in the space as a direct translation of an antique loom. In Cleveland, the spindles and cable define the periphery whose armatures are fragments of the loom.

Both spaces attempt to make a new architecture as a building/object within a building, to accommodate the program while standing apart from the commercial aspects of a mall environment inherent in the existing spaces.



Upper right: Politix Portland store; lower right: Portland store plan; lower left: Cleveland store; top left: Cleveland store plan.



Above and lower left: facades, Vitra Furniture Manufacturing Facility and Museum; top right: site plan; top left: first floor plan and section.

HONOR AWARD

Frank O. Gehry & Associates, Inc.

VITRA INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING FACILITY AND MUSEUM

Weil am Rhein, West Germany

Owner
Rolf Fehlbaum
Structural Engineer
Gerschik & Falk
Executive Architect
Gunter Pfeifer Architekt
Photographer
Richard Bryant

FREED: I really like this one because it doesn't mess up the old factory. It presents a context on placing the piece.

HOLL: The space and the light that comes in seem quite nice.

SCHMERTZ: This is wonderful, lovely. It is really well done.

HOLL: Normative rationalistic, a very rational proportion which allows for the idiosyncratic to exist in a different context.

FREED: This is what all good architecture does today with big spaces. It allows functional, easy to operate spaces that are a lot easier to read. I like the way the museum is separated out...it can do what it wants to do as a figurative piece, a furniture piece, or a sculpture piece without touching the box. What's

being said is there is a street on which there are public buildings, which are backed by a block.

SCHMERTZ: An expressionistic, lively, tumbling, curious folly, attached to a straightforwardly designed industrial plant. The folly part is a museum displaying as art the objects the plant produces. The

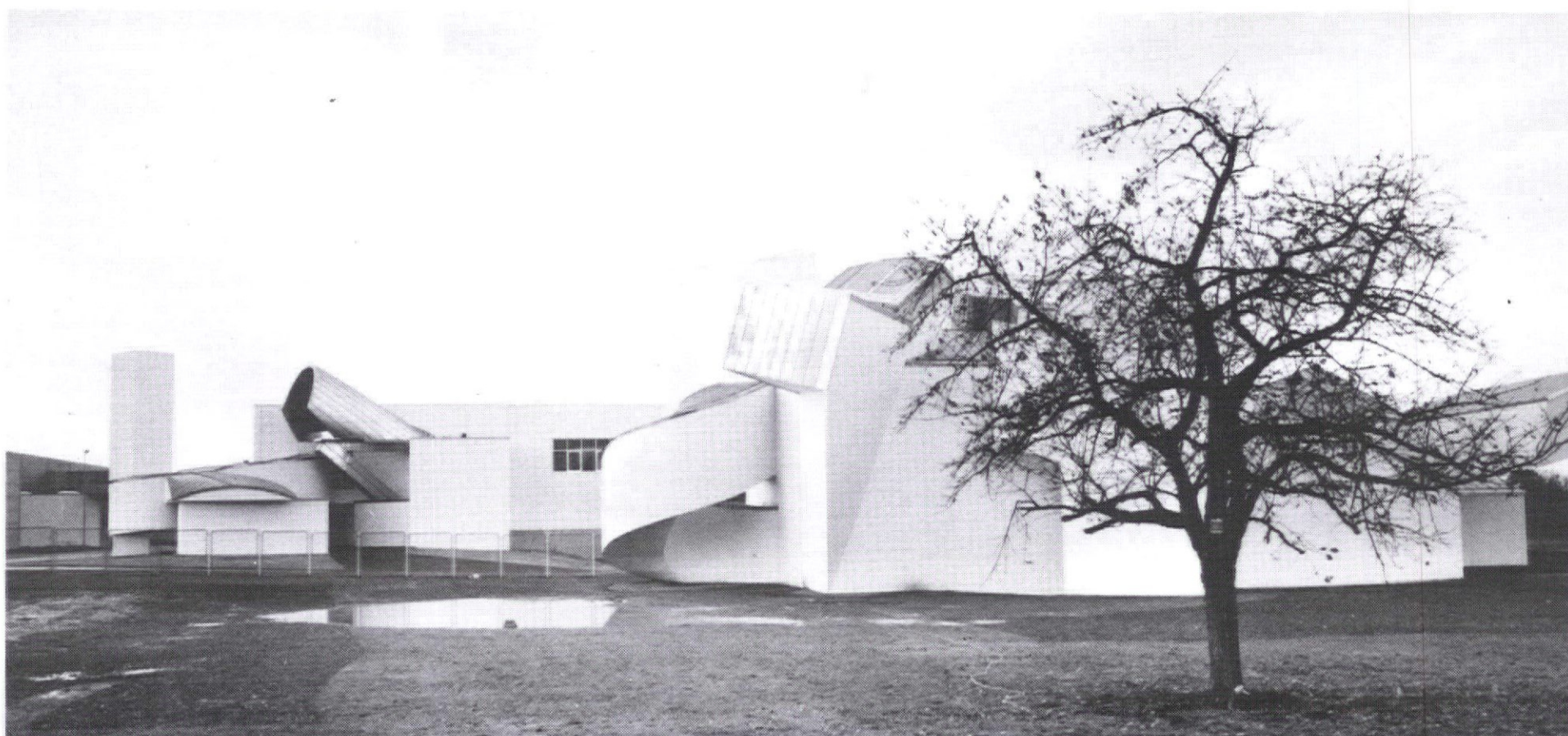
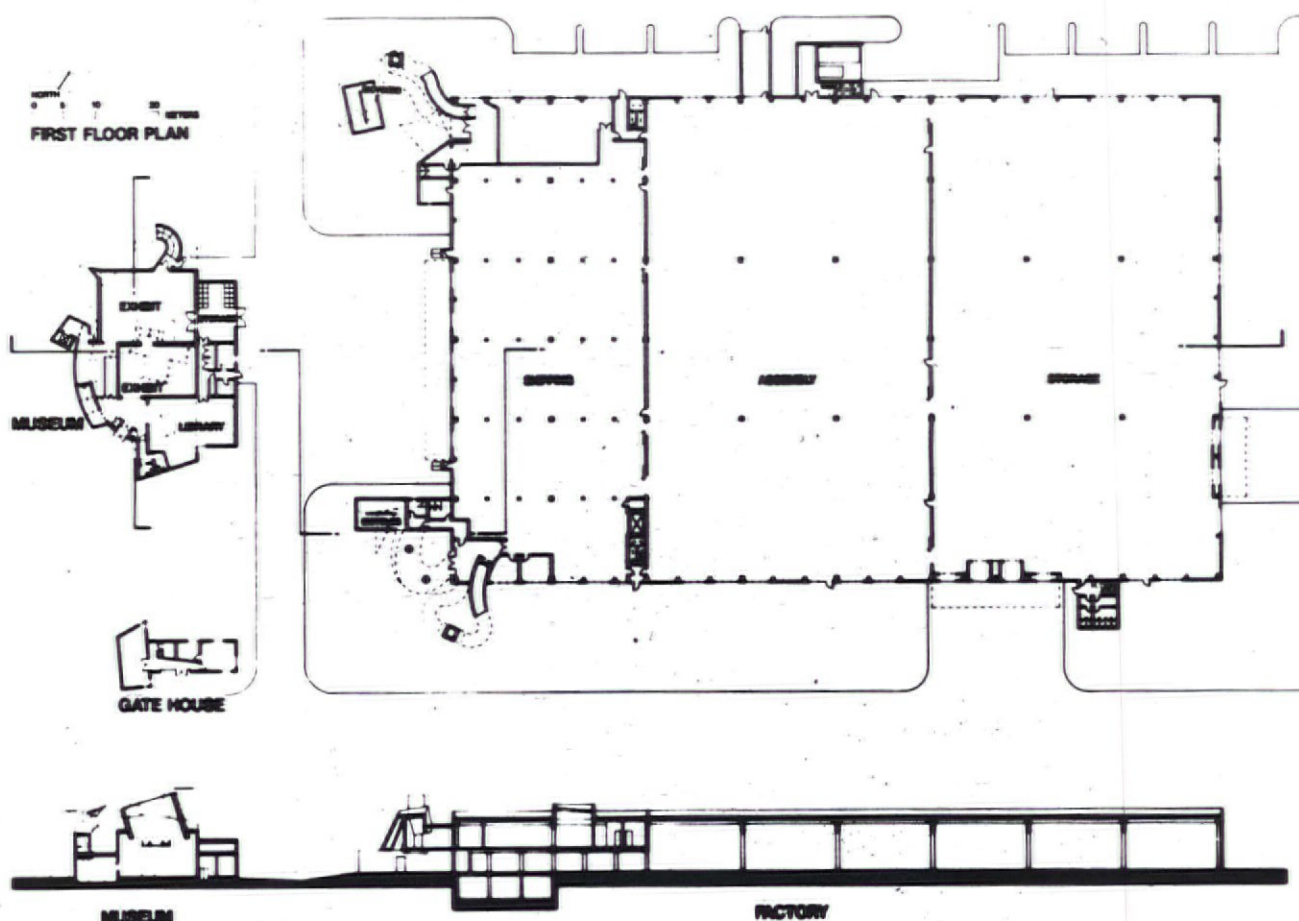
architect has pushed, pulled, piled, crushed, and generally deconstructed the folly as far as he could manage without utterly disrupting its purpose, while making the plant as plain as plain. Holl and Freed were the champions of this one.

This project encompasses three major parts: a seating assembly plant with adjacent office, mezzanine and distribution areas; a small museum to house the owner's collection of furniture (seventeenth century through present day) as well as his library of manufacturer's catalogues and other information; and preparation of a master plan that includes a new entrance road and gatehouse, a future expansion of the factory, museum parking and ancillary facilities.

The factory is a concrete frame construction with a stucco finish, skylights and large windows. The offices located on the north mezzanine have spectacular views of the adjacent mountains, the museum, and a Claes Oldenburg sculpture. This north facade faces the main road and is the factory's public face as well as a backdrop for the museum. Sculptural ramps and entrance canopies flank the factory facade and make "book-ends" to the museum.

The museum building is composed of a catalogue library, office storage and support spaces in addition to the galleries. These spaces are treated as spatially interpenetrating volumes so that the exhibitions can be linked from one room to another. Skylights introduce natural light. The construction is plaster over masonry and metal panels.

The master plan calls for several independent galleries to be added to the initial museum building and additional factories added to the west side of the new entrance road. Parking is to be eventually expanded at the west and south ends of the site.



L.A. ARCHITECT

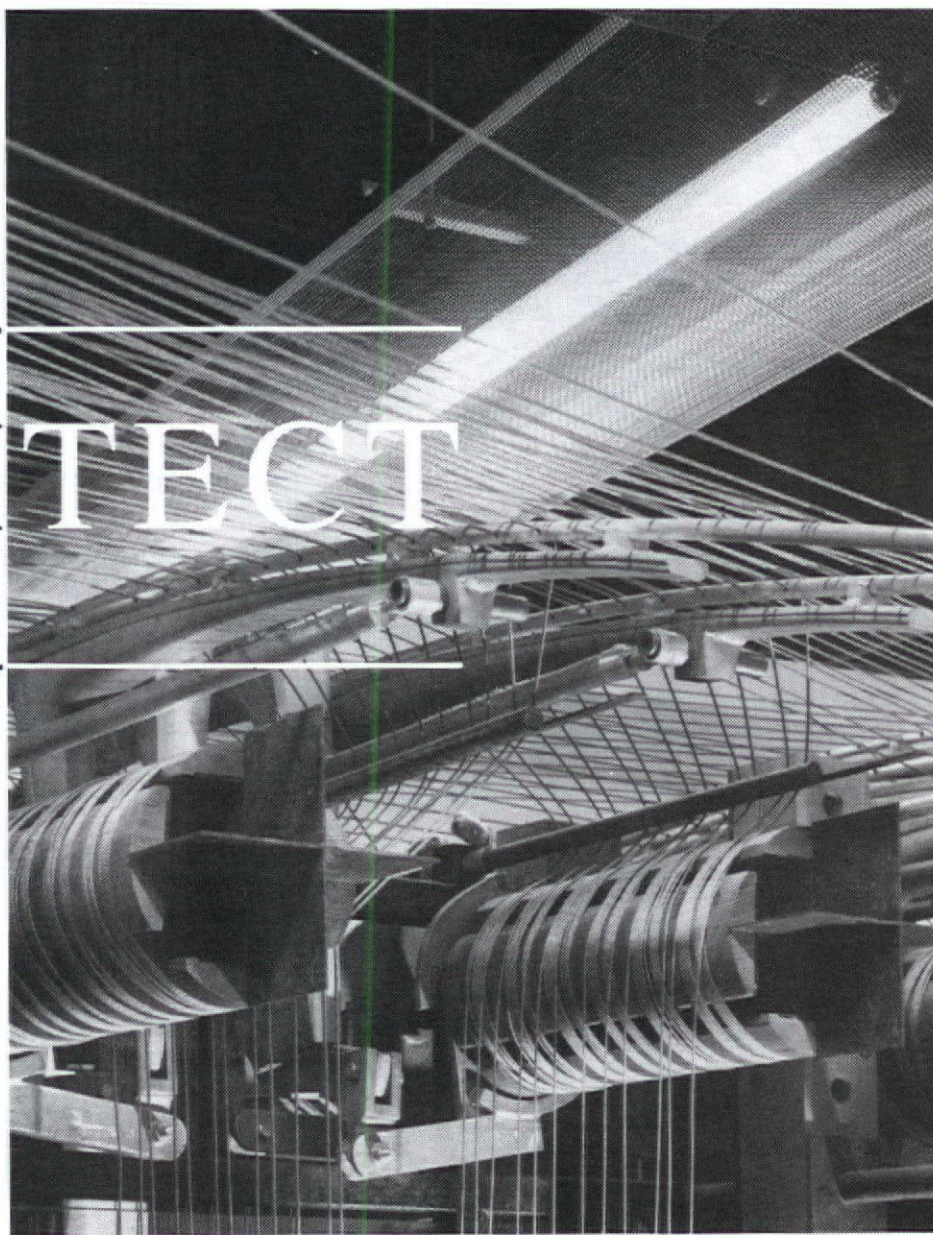
1990 Design Awards

The consensus reached by the 1990 AIA/LA Design Awards jury was that while Los Angeles architecture is in the forefront of architecture in the United States, its vocabulary is being diluted by architects who unthinkingly emulate perennial award winners such as Frank Gehry and Morphosis. In a lengthy discussion during the course of the awards judging on September 22, jurors James Ingo Freed, FAIA, of Pei Cobb Freed, Steven Holl, AIA, and Mildred Schmertz, FAIA, architectural writer and critic, agreed that Los Angeles architects have a great deal of talent, but are lacking in conviction.

The jury cited the work of Rudolph Schindler, Richard Neutra, Irving Gill and Greene and Greene, suggesting that Los Angeles' heritage as the city of modern architecture may have been forgotten by today's architects. It was noted that while these early architects worked with fundamental principles of architecture based on tectonic proportions, appropriate materials, and the use of light and space to create special effects, the expressionistic character of much of today's architecture goes beyond these basic principles, and is therefore more difficult to teach.

The jurors speculated that Los Angeles' urban sprawl may force projects to compete for recognition. Los Angeles architects who feel that they have no control over the larger built environment may think the only alternative is to focus inward, packing every building full of gadgets. Instead the jury advocated the use of a common language to achieve greater continuity.

James Freed expressed the feeling that spaces in Los Angeles are "too wide," and that no particular place acts as a focal point for the city. While he noted that Santa Monica and Venice approach a sense of



Detail from Politix store, Michael Rotondi and Thom Mayne/Morphosis.

urban scale, his final conclusion was that while "San Francisco planning is much too rigid...Los Angeles is not rigid enough."

As always, jurors hoped that out of the 150 projects submitted anonymously, they would discover an unknown prodigy. They were also somewhat influenced by recently published projects, and often tried to guess the names of the architects. However, neither of these objectives seemed to affect the final selection.

By mid-afternoon, they had eliminated all but 22 projects. This first phase seemed to go fairly quickly, but in narrowing the group down to the final six projects, the jury engaged in extended discussion on the philosophy and stylistic qualities of each project. Steven Holl and James Freed expressed interest in visiting the actual projects, however Mildred Schmertz objected that visiting only the local projects would lend an unfair advantage to some. As usual, they concluded that one day was insufficient to review all the projects and make the final awards selection.

When the number of submissions had been narrowed down to the final six, the jury decided to bestow two levels of awards: an honor award for the most outstanding of the projects; and merit awards for the rest of the projects deserving recognition. Of the six projects that received awards, one unbuilt submission was later dropped when it was determined that the project, contrary to the rules of the program, would be constructed at a later date.

Once again, the jury pointed out that the submission packages lacked quality. A few projects were submitted with slides inserted upside down and backwards, revealing a particular lack of care. The jurors pointed out that the clarity of presentation drawings helps communicate the project ideas, as does simply ordering the projects in a logical sequence in the carousels. Based on his experience, Steven Holl recommended that for future awards programs, the submission of a project in booklet form would enable the jurors to study the work more carefully. Mildred Schmertz added that a special award recognizing significant architecture from the past 25-50 years

would remind Los Angeles architects of their heritage.

Finally, although the jury was in agreement on the projects deserving recognition, like other juries before them, they were disappointed not to have discovered an unknown star.

Robert M. Simons, AIA

Larry Schlossberg, AIA

Mr. Simons, an architect with Wolff/Lang/Christopher Architects, Inc., and Mr. Schlossberg, an architect with Gruen Associates, are both members of the 1990 Design Awards Committee.

On behalf of the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Design Awards Committee wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their generous contributions to the success of the 1990 Design Awards Program:

- **William R. Sims, AIA** and **Walt Disney Imagineering** for their tireless efforts and assistance in making the arrangements for the awards reception at Walt Disney Studios;

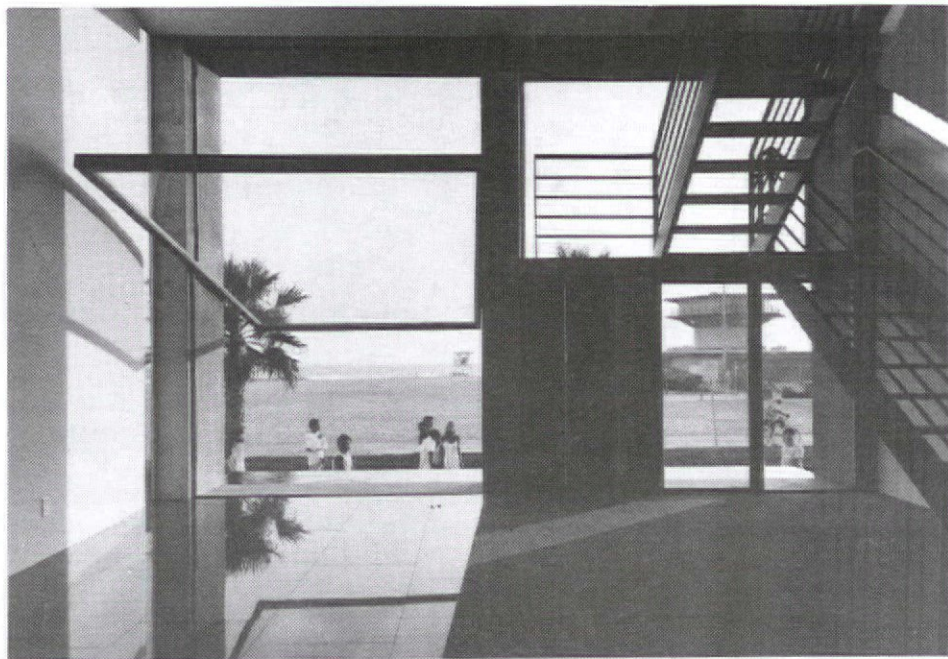
- **Thom Mayne, AIA** and **Ki Suh Park, FAIA** for their assistance in securing our outstanding jury;

- **Gensler and Associates/Architects** for graphic design;

- **Don Marcell** and **Universal Reproduction** for printing the jury biographies and reception invitation;

- **Westform Industries** for printing the Call for Entries;

- **Santa Barbara Winery** for providing the exceptional wines served at the awards reception.



Interior, Venice House, Antoine Predock, Architect.